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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the trends in Federal support for dcctoral education from 1960-1971. The peak of Federal support was in 1968-69, with funds for fellowships decreasing significantly in the ensuing years. Because of cuts in Federal R&D expenditures many of the new doctorates are nc longer as easily absorbed by the job market as in previous years. This situation has caused many departments to limit their admission of new graduate students, and has discouraged institutions from launching new doctoral programs. Because of a ccntinued decrease in Federal support, many institutions may have to eliminate some existing doctoral programs, and serious questions are being asked within the Federal Government about the worth and effectiveness of continued support for advanced education. High priority areas will probably be the following: (1) assisting the disadvantaged; (2) support for fields where a deficit exists, such as the environment, transportation, and urban studies; (3) strengthening the quality of graduate programs by geographic areas; and (4) some non-categorical support for institutions. Notwithstanding these priorities, present support levels for fellowships and traineeships, though much reduced, will probably be maintained during the next few years. (AF)

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THE OUTLOOK FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT*

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DR. J. WAYNE REITZ: Madam President and Members of The Council of Graduate Schools: I am happy to know that Mina Rees did mention the fact that I am a Floridian. I still consider myself a Floridian although now a bureaucrat in Washington, although I hope none too bureaucrat.

But I would like to commend the leadership

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of The Council of Graduate Schools and all of those others of you who may have participated in it in selecting Florida as your site for this annual convention. It is the first time that I have ever attended a national convention in Miami when the President of the Chamber of Commerce did not come and greet you. This, perhaps, reflects the serious attitude of The Council of Graduate Schools in getting on to its business rather than going through such formalities.

I am happy that we can be in this very modest hotel. (Laughter.) You will note in Miami hotels that we have a very wonderful group of employees representing many national and ethnic groups.

It reminds me of the story of the little Swedish girl who was working in one of the restaurants here. I like to tell this story because it tells the very affectionate relationship between Floridians and people from Georgia. You can only tell stories of this type when there are affectionate relationships.

I am sorry that my dear friend, Charlie Lester, who is on the pre-registration list is not going to be with us.

But this little Swedish girl had been here

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six months and she had waited a table where there had been Georgians for some three or four days. One morning at breakfast she made this observation. She said, "You know, I am here six months and I have worked, I have worked and worked and I can now just speak a little bit of English and you Georgia crackers come down here and you speak it in no time."

(Laughter.)

I should like to start my brief comments with a very profound statement. But before making that profound statement, I would also observe that our topic has really three headings, as I got it, and I never was sure just which one I was to take: The doctoral population, the outlook from the Federal Government, and then the subheading I sort of had, but it fell on your program, "Observations on the Washington scene."

On that point I would observe that one of the characteristics of the Washington scene is that it never stays that way very long.

The top leadership, for example, in both the Department in which I serve and the Office of Education has changed in the past year. As a matter of fact, I can't find in the morning paper whether we have a

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Commissioner of Education or not. But that if we do have--and I presume we are going to have within a day or two--in the short three years plus three months that I have been in the Office of Education, counting Acting Commissioners, this will be the fourth Commissioner with whom we have worked, and we are already working on our fourth Secretary.

(Laughter.)

The legislative proposals for higher education have been discussed and debated in Washington and I think it is fair to say rather substantially modified.

In this period of continuing budget stringency, proposals involving major new expenditures are unlikely to be supported.

At the same time there are indications of a new Administration resolve to consult with institutions of higher education before basic policy changes are made or new legislative proposals are advanced. I think this is of very much interest to and to betterments of relationships with the Federal establishment and higher education.

The impact this changing scene may have

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on doctoral population remains to be seen, but in the event, as I have indicated, my remarks are not focused on the doctoral population from the demand side of the Federal Government but, rather, they are intended to discuss present and future support of the Federal Government of graduate education at the doctoral level.

Large scale Federal support for doctoral study without restriction as to field began with the National Defense Education Act of 1958. The twofold objectives, for example, of Title IV, were to increase the number of well qualified college and university faculty and to increase the number of strong doctoral programs throughout the nation. Of course, there were earlier Federal programs and several continue in existence with more specific objectives, particularly those of the National Science Foundation and the training grants of the National Institutes of Health; not to mention, of course, the short period when we had NASA fellowships and also the other fellowship programs such as the Atomic Energy Commission and others in the Federal Government.

There were later programs which provided assistance for construction of academic facilities through

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the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 and for libraries and higher education personnel training with the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the amendments by way of the Education Professions Development Act of 1967.

Now, if we might just have the first slide. We will only be on slides for about a minute or two.

(Showing slide) This is a very simple little slide which illustrates the period of legislative creativity and substantial funding increases for new programs which, starting in 1960--or we could go back a little earlier--but with that in 1960 through projection of 1971 of the total for fellowships and traineeships of the Federal Government. You will note that we started out in '60--I mean, that's where this data picks up--with $25 million; we reached a peak of around $250 million in 1968, and then it has been going downward to where we are projected, for 1971, at roughly $150 million of support for fellowships and traineeships through the agencies of the Federal Government, and that does not include the National Institutes of Mental Health and perhaps some N.I.H. traineeships.

(Showing slide) Unfortunately this should have been done by hand, but I will merely point out that

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these are data for full-time graduate enrollment which, if we go back to '60-'61, full-time graduate enrollment in the United States, 124,689; and for 1969-70, 354,000; and the projection for 1970-71, 380,000.

And of the number of Federal awards in those years from roughly 8,000 Federal awards, fellowships and traineeships in 1960-61, to a peak of 551,446 in 1968-69, with the projection of '70-'71 of 34,834; all types of fellowship awards and traineeships.

Then the right-hand column, because it being the largest non-categorical fellowship program of the Federal Government, the N.D.A. Title IV, 1960-61, we had a total of 2,500, and we hit the maximum in 1968-69 in place of one, two, and three-year Fellows, of 15,328. And then the projection for 1970-71 for this current year in which we are, 8,603.

And if you look in the last column which says the percent of full-time students supported by Federal traineeships and fellowships, in 1960-61, we were supporting just over six percent of the total graduate enrollment. We hit the peak in 1967-68 of 17 percent. And on the basis of our projections for '70-'71, the support will be back to nine percent of the graduate

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enrollment, or about the same as it was in 1962-63 or '63-'64.

Actually where we showed that 8,600 as the projection for N.D.A. Title IV fellowships, using that as an illustration, in '71-'72 this will probably be around a total of eighty-two thousand.

In the early years of the Title IV program the number of new three-year awards, as you may recall, was 1,500 per year. This number was doubled in 1965, and again doubled to 6,000 in 1966 and '67.

For this next year, for the year '71-'72--and we trust we will be able to make the announcements and new awards by the 10th of January, and while we have not had--we have an appropriation--we have not had an official release of that appropriation, we anticipate that we will announce 2,100 new NDEA fellowships for September '71 as compared to 2,300 in '70 this past year.

Now, there is going to be a little extra bonus in this--I don't know whether we call it a bonus--but without going into details as to how things happened, we have a unique situation we have never had before in the NDEA Title IV program. We will have about 850, we

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hope, of one-year fellowships which we will add to your quota and notification will be made of those sometime in February, and not later than March, which can be used to assist you in meeting the demands from returning veterans, for lapses or vacated fellowships, or for fourth-year NDEA Fellows.

Now, the up and down trends of Federal support for doctoral education in general and Title IV in particular seem to illustrate the perils of succeeding too well. Of course, it is not only the increase in Federal output which is responsible, but also the sizable cuts in Federal R and D expenditures.

In early years the rising level of these expenditures permitted the rapid absorption of new doctoral graduates, particularly in the sciences, in defense-related industry, or Government programs. But in recent years, particularly the last two, Government and industry have been employing fewer of the new graduates. The result is a new labor market situation in which assistant professorships at research-oriented universities or in good liberal arts colleges are no longer readily available for the new doctoral graduate.

The change in the job climate has

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understandably produced a good deal of concern or even alarm, especially among students nearing the end of their doctoral studies.

A direct consequence to the reduction in Federal fellowship support has been the decision of a number of institutions to reduce their graduate school admissions. And, of course, the demand for doctorates has also had its impact.

A number of institutions, including some of the more prestigious graduate schools, already announced such reductions and they became effective this year, and I have no doubt that others will be taking similar action.

A further direct consequence of Federal policy will be to discourage some institutions which have been planning to launch new doctoral programs from doing so.

A few years ago such institutions could reasonably expect some fellowship support. Today when the total number of fellowships is declining, it is difficult to justify such support when there are so many well established, highly regarded programs.

In fact, in retrospect it is apparent that Federal programs, some Federal programs may have

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given too much encouragement to too many universities to embark upon doctoral programs.

I believe that the watchword for the 1970s, not only with respect to Federal support, but within the higher education community itself, if each institution will be committed to the role which it can best serve, will be to limit or even reduce the number of doctoral programs and improve the quality of those that remain.

In addition to the direct consequences of reduced Federal fellowships there will, of course, be indirect consequences. Faculty members and graduate students also read the newspapers and the national journals and will draw their own conclusions from the generally pessimistic accounts that seem to have become so fashionable. Thus, the possibility of an overreaction in the way of Federal support is very real and very serious.

And that leads me to conclude by mentioning some of the questions which are being asked of us these days in Washington, partly as a result of the new conditions in the labor market, although it's not nearly as bad as has already been pointed out here this afternoon,

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as many reports have tried to make it, and partly because of rigid restrictions on Federal expenditures. There is going to be, within the Federal Government, some spirited debate and it is going on now over the future of Federal support for advanced graduate study.

And I might say where the most pointed questions are being asked--and it is a very vulnerable point that they are being asked--is in the Office of Management and Budget. That is a new term for what we used to just call the Bureau of the Budget.

These are the types of questions they are asking: "Since Federal R and D support is declining, why is there any need to stimulate the production of doctorates through fellowship support?"

"Since major financial benefits accrue to individuals undergoing advanced education, why shouldn't graduate students be expected to borrow the funds needed to finance their education?" This is a hard-boiled, economic determinant position that some are taking.

Three: "Since the supply of college teachers in most academic fields now seems adequate--" these are the questions they are asking, "--is there any need to continue programs whose major objectives have

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been in the past the preparation of college and university teachers--"such as, for example, most of the programs in the Office of Education.

Four: "Since previous efforts to protect supply of and demand for doctoral graduates have not been conspicuously successful, perhaps a free market is the best way to allocate these resources and so why let the Federal Government be concerned about them?"

And the final type of question and observation made is: "Doctoral education, after all, affects only a small number of our population of America's young people, but a much larger number of young people are denied the opportunity for a college education because of cultural, social and economic handicaps. Thus, equalizing educational opportunities for these people becomes and should become--"it is said, "--a more important objective than supporting a small number of students at the most advanced level."

So, such are the types of questions. When we prepare our budget requests for traineeships and fellowships in the Federal Government, we go back five years and we would make projections of statistical data or the demand for college and university teachers and

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others. Thus, that was it. We no longer can do this, but we have to rely upon the more the argument of graduate education as being a great national asset and that we cannot allow the pendulum to swing just because of the interpretation of current factors and what decisions are being made today, and not impinging upon today, but what will happen five or six years from now.

So the answers to these questions will in large part determine the nature of Federal policies in fiscal '72 and the immediate years ahead.

Some indication of these answers will, of course, become available when the President issues his budget message in January.

In advance of that message--and we never know what is going to be in it--but it seems reasonable to suppose or assume that a number of objectives will continue to have a high priority in Administrative thinking and these are: Continued emphasis in assisting the disadvantaged, to which we will all subscribe.

B: More support for fields where it can be shown that deficits exist. For example, the whole range of environmental and ecological studies, transportation, urban problems, and the like.

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C: Continued interest to insure strength in quality of graduate programs by geographic areas.

D: Some form of non-categorical institution support. I think we are going to have legislation in this, but there will probably be little money as long as we are in the tight fiscal situation and in an inflationary period.

E: The stabilization of Federal support at near present levels. That's an encouragement statement and this is the assumption I am making. Because this last listed item is particularly important if an overreaction to the present situation is to be avoided.

This has some Government support, for graduate education is extremely important. Potential graduate students need to feel that society approves of their efforts to achieve advanced training and a tangible evidence of that approval is extremely important.

Furthermore, both students and institutions need the assurance of continuity in order to make sensible, long-range plans.

For these and other reasons, I believe the present Federal fellowship and trainee programs should be--and I rather believe they will be maintained at

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approximately their current, although highly reduced present levels.

To do that would be, if we look to the future, at our nation's own peril. However, increases other than possibly for general institutional support will have to wait, in all probability, a further clarification of some of these questions that are now being asked.